

10/539002

**SHARPS DISPOSAL CONTAINER**

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application Number  
5 60/433,842 filed on December 16, 2002.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0001] The present invention relates to sharps disposal containers.

[0002] The safe and efficient disposal of sharps such as surgical knives, blades,  
10 hypodermic needles and the like is a problem for medical and other healthcare  
facilities. Disposable containers have been developed in recent years which provide  
a reasonably high degree of security for disposable sharps articles and materials from  
hospitals and clinics. Many of these articles, such as needles and surgical blades  
known as sharps, and other similar articles and materials, must be disposed of in a  
15 manner to keep them out of the hands of unauthorized persons and to keep them  
from being reused.

[0003] The containers are normally designed to prevent the removal of materials  
from the container under ordinary circumstances until permanently closed. The  
permanent closure is normally present on the container and often used as a  
20 temporary cover until the container is filled and ready for permanent closure.  
However, the permanent closure is frequently unintentionally placed in the  
permanent position prior to completely filling the container. This results in  
unnecessary waste of containers and unnecessary cost. Therefore, it is desirable that  
the container be completely filled prior to permanent closure for disposal.

25 [0004] There is a need for a closure that may be safely used as a temporary  
closure without the problem of unintentionally placing it in the permanent closure  
position. There is a further need for a container have a solid sturdy base that  
provides a leak-proof seal between the lid and base.